Background on Vaillancourt Fountain
In 2004, the water had stopped pumping for a couple of years due to steep energy costs at the time. That same year, a proposal was presented to the board in 2004 to demolish the fountain. Armand Vaillancourt protested the removal, and an agreement was reached to continue operating the fountain with additional private funding. Today, the fountain is again drained and suffers from multiple mechanical issues. The public is also only able to experience the fountain from a distance due to some structural concerns. Recently released renderings of the planned renovation at Embarcadero Plaza did not include the fountain, which renewed public speculation about its fate. The removal of art from public spaces can be a contentious matter to navigate.

There have been numerous instances of art being removed from public spaces, often due to historical and political reasons. The Vaillancourt fountain is more about urban planning and the utilization of public space than it is about political disagreement, and there are some helpful examples to keep in mind during this process.

***Tilted Arc,* New York City[1]**
In the 1980s, a large sculpture called *Tilted Arc* was positioned at the Federal Plaza in New York City. Despite a nearly two-year planning process for the sculpture, there was never much public engagement. As a result, many of the workers at Federal Plaza did not approve of the sculpture once it was installed. The sculpture was managed by the General Services Administration (GSA), which held three days of public hearings on the sculpture's future. Despite most of the public comments being in favor of keeping the statue, the GSA still decided to remove it. A legal battle following the removal of the *Tilted Arc* confirmed GSA's authority to remove the sculpture. Once the sculpture was removed, the area was transformed into a public space featuring trees and benches.

***Sasaki Fountain,* New York City[2]**
The Sasaki Fountain was demolished in 2017 in accordance with plans to renovate the public spaces around Citicorp Center. Despite the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission's description of the fountain as a historic feature, the demolition of the fountain proceeded without any public input. Members of the public and preservation-minded community groups were left deeply dissatisfied with the whole process.

***Invocation*, San Francisco[3]**
A sculpture called *Invocation* was damaged during a windstorm in its original location at the intersection of Chesar Chaves and Vermont Streets. A repair team removed the sculpture from the site, but after further analysis, concluded that the sculpture could not be safely returned. The San Francisco Arts Commission undertook a sustained period of community engagement to identify an area that could be used to relocate the sculpture, thereby better protecting it in the

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[1]https://www.archpaper.com/2017/06/landmarked-sasaki-fountain-citicorp-demolished/#:~:text=At%20Citicorp's%20last%20public%20hearing,Stay%20tuned.
[2]https://www.archpaper.com/2017/06/landmarked-sasaki-fountain-citicorp-demolished/
[3]https://www.sfartscommission.org/our-role-impact/press-room/press-release/san-francisco-arts-commission-announces-completed

future. Ultimately, the Commission decided on the Palega Recreation Center as the sculpture's new home. Repeated public meetings and a public survey all contributed to the decision-making process.

Conclusion

The San Francisco Arts Commission has a well-established process for removing art, including sculptures and fountains, from public spaces. Ultimately, getting complete community support for any decision is an impossible task. Robust community engagement remains a crucial part of decisions like these, and the failure to give people a chance to speak can lead to long-held resentment. No two scenarios are the same, but some options for handling sculptures that need to be removed include relocation, a memorial plaque for the work, and issuing payment to the artist.